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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 MAPUTO 000981

NOFORN  
SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MZ](#) [MA](#)

SUBJECT: MADAGASCAR TALKS: LOCAL REACTIONS TO MAPUTO II

REF: A. MAPUTO 965

[1](#)B. ANTANANARIVO 618

[1](#)C. MAPUTO 960

[1](#)D. MAPUTO 916

Classified By: A/DCM Matthew Roth for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (S//NF) SUMMARY: On September 1 and 2, Charge and poloff met separately with the French Charge Gilles Petit de la Villeon and former Mozambican Foreign Minister (and current Executive Director of the Chissano Foundation) Leonardo Simao in an effort to get local reactions to the failed Maputo II negotiations. Both Simao and de la Villeon believe that Rajoelina is increasingly controlled by his own movement which no longer trusts him to negotiate alone. Both are also concerned about an increasingly divided military, which is using scare tactics to maintain power through the Prime Minister position as well as through Rajoelina. September 4 is a critical deadline for a solution to the current Malagasy impasse, which if left unsolved, according to Simao, may result in sanctions at the upcoming SADC Summit in Kinshasa, which ends on September 9. Simao described the role of the French in negative terms, explaining that they continue to back Rajoelina despite being nervous about the Malagasy military, and commenting that they are treating Madagascar in a quasi-colonial manner. Both interlocutors appeared pessimistic about the chances of finding a resolution, suggesting that further instability is increasingly possible.  
END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) On September 2 Charge met with Chissano Foundation Executive Director Leonardo Simao to get a readout on the Maputo II conference. In his usual straightforward manner, Simao explained that the major impasse of Maputo II revolved around the Rajoelina movement's desire to retain the positions of President and Prime Minister in the Malagasy transitional government. On September 1, Poloff met with French Charge Gilles Petit de la Villeon to get French reactions to the Maputo II talks. De la Villeon stated that France did not make any official statements regarding Maputo II, but that it followed the conference closely, sending its desk officer and Ratsiraka's movement from Paris in an effort to facilitate the mediation. The sticking point, according to de la Villeon was the designation of leadership roles within the transitional government, to include the posts of President, Vice President, Prime Minister, and senior Minister positions including Internal Security, Defense, Finance, Mines, and Foreign Affairs.

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RAJOELINA INCREASINGLY CONTROLLED BY HIS MOVEMENT  
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[1](#)3. (S//NF) According to de la Villeon, though Andry

Rajoelina wanted to compromise by handing over the Prime Minister position currently encumbered by Monja Roindefo to one of the other three movements in order to keep Rajoelina as president of the transitional government, but Roindefo refused to give up his position. In a separate conversation Simao concurred, saying that the Rajoelina movement is split into two wings, political and military. Simao explained that Roindefo is supported by the military element within the Rajoelina party who are afraid that losing control of the Prime Minister position, which would likely go to the Ratsiraka movement, would in turn limit their control of the state. De la Villeon said that France had evidence that Rajoelina had lost control of his movement and is being internally manipulated, explaining that the military recently threatened Rajoelina's life and family in an effort to exert greater control on him during the Maputo II talks. The French Charge also commented that Maputo II did not go as well as Maputo I because SADC mediator Joachim Chissano lost control of the principals. Rajoelina's movement apparently refused to agree to "principals only" closed door negotiations, and as a result, the Maputo II talks stalled.

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CONCERNS ABOUT MILITARY AND CURRENT GOVERNMENT  
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14. (S//NF) Simao explained that the international mediators realize that they need to appease the military in order to avert conflict; however, they did not want to invite them to the talks as a "fifth movement," in an effort to de-politicize the military in the process. Simao said that

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the military is afraid of recriminations following any return of Ravalomanana, and as a result the mutinous "CAPSAT" (Ref B) officers are attempting to instill fear in Malagasy political leaders, even resorting to kidnappings of prominent politicians. Simao pointed to human rights abuses by CAPSAT during the Rajoelina coup, and said that those military officers are particularly anxious about a change of government and any human rights charges they may face in the future. Commenting on the Malagasy military, de la Villeon believes that they are so internally divided that they would not be able to put in place a junta style government, and are employing scare tactics to try and keep Rajoelina in line. De la Villeon sees this as further evidence that Rajoelina's movement does not think he possesses the political maturity to negotiate independently. Simao believes that members of the current Malagasy government are taking what's left in the state coffers because there is general consensus that the current regime will not last. Simao pointed to reports of the government's expropriation of 10 tons of rice in warehouses owned by Ravalomanana as evidence. Simao believes that by November, the Malagasy state will be unable to pay government salaries, to include the military.

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SEPTEMBER 4 DEADLINE CRITICAL  
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15. (C) Simao and de la Villeon both believe that the new deadline of September 4 is a "make or break" date for the ongoing negotiations in Antananarivo, and should the parties not reach consensus by the September 9 close of the SADC summit in Kinshasa, sanctions would be likely. Simao explained that Chissano is preparing a report which will be discussed at the SADC Summit. He also commented that no resolution could lead Madagascar into civil war, which would be difficult to stop and again would damage the reputation of SADC and the region. Simao said that in previous trips to Antananarivo he sensed significant angst and ill will in the population, and the situation appears to growing more tense, referring to news of a recent attempt on the life of former President Albert Zafy.

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16. (S//NF) Simao confirmed that France prefers to see Rajoelina remain in power, though they officially have not taken sides. France would not like to see Ravalomanana return because of his anti-French policies, including his efforts to introduce English in the country, because he expelled the French Ambassador to Madagascar whom he believed was fomenting a coup against him, and because Ravalomanana allegedly made business deals with other countries at the expense of French interests, according to Simao. Pointing out that the French have protected Rajoelina in the past, Simao opined that the French remain fearful of the Malagasy military and of any potential instability in Madagascar where they have over 20,000 resident nationals, many other francophone speakers for which they are responsible, and significant business interests. Simao described the efforts of the unnamed French desk officer to pressure the various parties on the margins of the Maputo I and II talks as inelegant, leaving a bad impression. Simao said that French meddling in Malagasy affairs amounted to quasi-colonialism.

INTERNATIONAL ENCOURAGEMENT WELCOMED

17. (C) Simao described the days leading up to September 4 as "critical." Simao explained that on September 1 the four movements were to meet in Antananarivo; however, the Rajoelina movement did not attend. Simao believes that appropriate diplomatic encouragement, including from the U.S, for all parties to participate in the ongoing dialogue would be useful in the next two decisive days.

COMMENT: OBSERVERS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT RESOLUTION

18. (C) Both Simao and de la Villeon appear increasingly pessimistic regarding the chances for consensus in the current Malagasy stalemate. Both appear to believe that the

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current deadlock may lead to a further economic deterioration, and potentially to civil war. This open and frank discussion of the situation by both the French Mission and the Chissano camp suggests that the situation may be increasingly intractable and the pessimism expressed in Ref A may be spreading to the negotiators and French alike.

CHAPMAN